

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
October 6, 2014

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held on Monday, October 6, 2014 in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street, Hartwell. Present were Mayor Brandon Johnson, Councilmembers Arthur Craft, Billy Ethridge, Mike MacNabb, Tray Hicks, Tony Haynie, and Bill Griggs. Also present were City Manager David Aldrich, City Attorney Rob Leverett, City Clerk Jean Turner, Members of the Press/Media, and interested citizens.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brandon Johnson at approximately 7:00 p.m., followed by the invocation given by City Manager David Aldrich. Mayor Johnson led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

Mayor's Comments:

- All citizens are urged to go to the polls and vote on November 4, 2014.
- State Representative Alan Powell announces that an old fashioned bluegrass and barbecue will be held on Saturday, October 25, 2014 at the Stacy Britt Farm. Governor Nathan Deal will be in attendance as well as many state constitutional officers.
- The current utility bills include the first informational inserts regarding community events and other items of interest to citizens.
- October is National Domestic Violence Month.
- Input has been received from the Historic Preservation Commission, the Downtown Development Authority, and merchants regarding their review of the City's Sign Ordinance. Further work on revisions to the Ordinance will continue before final adoption.
- Should begin publicly recognizing city employees for their achievements, length of service, retirement, etc.
- Name tags to be prepared for city officials for use while attending conferences and training sessions.
- Letter received today from owner of Hartwell Marina informing the City of the withdrawal of their previous request for annexation of the Marina property into the incorporated area of the city. As stated in the letter, primary reasons for withdrawal of the annexation request were excessive delays in the annexation process, unreasonable guarantee requirements, and last minute costs. Mayor Johnson stated there had been a lack of consensus among Councilmembers regarding various concerns such as return on investment, and how to get some kind of guarantee from developers. He further stated that the City should have some type pamphlet in place to assist citizens with requirements, restrictions, fees, or ordinances regarding the annexation process. Councilman MacNabb expressed his disappointment of the Marina's withdrawal of the annexation request, stating that the future growth of the city would depend on how progressive the city would be, and he would not give up on such proposed annexations or developments.

Mayor Johnson read a Proclamation designating the week of November 3 – 11, 2014 as “Veterans Week”, while proclaiming November 11, 2014 as “Veterans Day.” Accepting the Proclamation were representatives of American Legion Post 109, who expressed appreciation to Mayor and Council.

A Proclamation was also read by the Mayor designating October 23 – 31, 2014 as “National Red Ribbon Week.” The Red Ribbon campaign was established by Congress in 1988 to encourage a drug-free lifestyle.

Hearing no corrections or additions to the minutes of the September 2, 2014 regular council meeting and the September 19, 2014 called meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Craft to approve as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie to table discussion regarding the Animal Control Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to evaluate some of the language included in the MOU. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Director Nicki Meyer addressed Mayor and Council asking for continuation of Council’s support for the 2015 Hydro Pro Watercross Tour event. As stated by Ms. Meyer, the cost for the director’s fee is \$20,000, of which the Chamber would support this by funding \$5,000, leaving a balance of \$15,000 split between the City and County. She further stated that these funds were already previously allocated and earmarked as indicated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Mega Ramp. Councilman Haynie commented that he felt a split between the City and County should not be 50/50, but rather an 80/20 split since the City received only 20% of sales tax revenue. While Councilman MacNabb stated that he fully supported such events, he agreed with Councilman Haynie that it was unfair to city taxpayers and the cost share for the city should be 20%. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to table the issue until the Mega Ramp MOU could be reviewed. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously.

As Council began to discuss consideration of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Director becoming a city employee, the City Manager estimated the additional cost of employee benefits to be approximately \$6,000 - \$10,000, excluding salary. Councilman Hicks stated that he felt the DDA was running just fine at present, and made a motion not to hire the DDA Director as a city employee. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge. DDA Chairman Carey Jackson explained that the DDA Board members felt it was in the best interest for the DDA to have the Director as a city employee in order to attract and maintain a talented director for that position. Following discussion and as the vote was called, motion carried 5 to 1 not to hire the DDA Director as a city employee. Voting in favor of the motion were Councilmembers Hicks, Ethridge, Haynie, Craft, and MacNabb. Opposing the motion was Councilman Griggs. Councilman Hicks stated that the issue could be looked at again at a later time.

Chief of Police Anthony Davis explained that several Police Department vehicles and two motorcycles had been sold and he wished to use the money from these sales to purchase a new 2015 Chevrolet Impala patrol vehicle. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Ethridge to approve the purchase of a 2015 Chevrolet Impala at a cost of approximately \$20,948.52 from Megel Chevrolet. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie to approve the purchase of two (2) Scott self-contained breathing apparatus for the Fire Department in the amount of \$10,749.28 from Municipal Emergency Services. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously. As stated in a memo from Fire Chief Terry Vickery, this was a budgeted item and Municipal Emergency Services was the sole supplier of Scott safety equipment in the area.

A motion was made by Councilman MacNabb, seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously to approve the revised Police Department Policies and Procedures pertaining to the Department's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team.

Following the second reading of Ordinance No. 2014-03 regarding an increase in hotel-motel tax, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to adopt the Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously. Upon adoption of this Ordinance, and as authorized by state legislature (Act 404), the City's levy of hotel-motel tax will increase from five percent (5%) to eight percent (8%).

Following the second reading of Utilities Ordinance No. 2014-04, a motion was made by Councilman Craft to adopt the Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously. The Ordinance amends and modifies the current Ordinance regarding utilities by adding language to offer various levels of incentives to potential developers.

In discussing the City's annual audit, the City Manager agreed to seek proposals for audit services, which would be on a 3-year basis.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to set the dates of November 3, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. and December 1, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. for public hearings regarding the City's proposed fiscal year 2015 budget. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously. The public hearings will be prior to the regular council meetings on these dates.

City Manager's Comments:

- South Forest Avenue work has been completed and opened back up.
- Pipe being ordered and work to be scheduled for Fairview Avenue project.

Council Comments:

- Councilman Griggs agreed with Councilman MacNabb's disappointment in the withdrawal of Marina annexation request. He issued an apology, stating that it was his opinion that the City should have done a better and quicker job regarding this request.

Citizen Comments:

- Mary Beth Focer asked who she should complain to if she had a complaint about a conflict of interest between someone on City Council and the City Attorney. The City Manager answered that she should make known any such complaints to either him or the Mayor. Also, referring to the political sign currently posted on the Chamber of Commerce property, Ms. Focer

complained that if this was public property, signs should not be posted on the property advocating a vote for one way or another. Council informed Ms. Focer that she should speak to someone at the Chamber or the Department of Transportation since this was not the City's property.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie, seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting into executive session for the purpose of discussing possible property transactions.

Following executive session, where no action was taken, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously to adjourn out of executive session back into regular session.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Craft to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk